

All wild birds are protected by state and federal laws, with the exception of the European starling, rock (feral) pigeon, and English sparrow. This means that you cannot shoot at, trap, poison, or otherwise kill, capture or possess one without a permit. However, there are many methods available to harass and prevent problems with birds that are damaging property.

TURKEY VULTURES

The turkey vulture has an average weight of 4 lbs. but has a wingspan of up to 6 feet. The black vulture, common in Indiana, is predominantly black and bright red head. They are protected by state and federal law and cannot be killed or captured without a permit.

Food Habits

Vultures usually find food by eating carrion. They have very good eyesight and sense of smell and can find a carcass easily.

Prevention and Control

Vultures may cause problems when they begin roosting on rooftops and trees in backyards and cities in large numbers. These roosts are largest in late fall through early spring. Eliminating food, roost trees, and nest sites will help reduce the number of birds in the area.

Remove any carcasses on your property promptly. On a farm, vultures are attracted to placentas where lambing/calving occurs and will be commonly found in these areas, attracted by the smell.

To deter them from a rooftop, install a wire or strong hardware cloth pulled tight about 8 inches above and parallel to the edge of the home to prevent vultures from perching in that area. You want to keep the wire tight to prevent the vultures from pushing it down.

Try repellants such as Tagelfoot, or double-sided tape in situations where installation is not possible or practical.

Removing roost sites and pruning branches may also cause vultures to move to another roost site.

Pyrotechnics can be used to harass the vultures. Starter pistols (where legal, firecrackers, propane cannons are sometimes effective. Be sure to check state and local laws before using these methods. Use these methods persistently and as soon as the problem starts to be most effective. If birds are already using a roost site, pyrotechnics may have to be fired on multiple nights as soon as the birds begin to roost.

Mylar balloons and reflective tape can also be strung in the roost trees or on the roof to try to deter the vultures, but may have limited success.

When these preventative and harassment measures fail and you are still experiencing significant problems due to vultures, contact the Indiana DNR and USFWS for permits to lethally remove the birds.

For more information about the prevention and control of turkey vultures, please go to:
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/statereports/NJ/vulturenj.pdf>